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## THE TRADE-UNION PROGRAMME OF "ENLIGHTENED SELFISHNESS"

The philosophy of unionism today is regarded as complete and final, as absolutely established and unimpeachable—much as certain economic doctrines were regarded as being finally determined a half-century since. This sense of absolute finality and unimpeachability presaged for economic science immediate disintegration and general repudiation of doctrines, and the re-writing of the whole science. Other absolutely established social philosophies have experienced the same sudden and final dissolution. In fact, history teaches that absolutism, and consequent sensitiveness to criticism, together with a certain disposition to irascibility, is historically speaking, commonly symptomatic of declining vitality in social institutions, as it is in the natural human body. Trade-unionism, certainly has no occasion to rely upon any doctrine of infallibility to establish its power.

On the contrary, it may safely, and might wisely, rely upon the strength of its own programme, upon the justness of its cause, and upon its record of achievement for its main defense against detractors—even against its honest-minded critics; but it has not chosen to do so. It not only does not seek honest criticism of its programme but resents any implications of fallibility as essentially impious. In the minds of labor leaders the programme of unionism is characterized as one of "masterful and surpassing intelligence," and one who presumes to criticize is assumed to be insincere and regardless of the welfare of the toiling masses. A judge who issues an injunction distasteful to organized labor, however exemplary and incorruptible the life he may have led, becomes at once, *ipso facto*, a "capitalistic tool." The judge who refuses such an injunction is an "able and distinguished chancellor, a judge loved by all honest men, and feared by respectable criminals." The injunction itself is an "outrageous, impudent, revolutionary invention of lawless plutocracy." The detective who runs down some

union man who has committed manslaughter is a "hireling anxious to make a record so as to earn his blood money." The critic of unionism is always actuated by "sickening hypocrisy," and his "mouthings" are devoid of "honesty and truth." The foremost educator of the country, and perhaps the strongest American personality, loses character when he presumes to comment upon unionism today, or upon the practices of unionism. Then his utterances and his actions clearly show him to be

not only unsympathetic to labor, but positively and bitterly hostile, taking advantage of every opportunity afforded, creating the opportunity when it did not present itself, to use the high position he occupies to vent his antagonism to every effort of labor to emerge from the misery of the past, the injustice of the present, and to achieve its hopes and aspirations for a higher and better life.

No declaration on the part of the critic that he too cares for the welfare and happiness of the toiling masses can be accepted as made in good faith. As a great movement in the interests of labor, unionism has developed an abnormal sensitiveness to criticism.

This sensitiveness does not seem warranted by any disposition on the part of the community to be unduly severe in its judgments. On the contrary, there would seem to be a general inhibition and suspension of judgment by the community where unionism is involved. Where any decision may reflect indirectly upon the practices of organized labor, even courts of justice and juries act slowly and uncertainly. In Chicago recently it required the examination of 700 veniremen to secure one juror in a trial of trade-union officials for manslaughter. In another case men who have been held mainly accountable for resort to violence and blackmail during the Chicago teamsters' strike have recently been freely acquitted of all guilt. There is no disposition to persecute or to martyrize unionism, but rather on every hand a disposition to bid it godspeed in the achievement of its purposes, and to impute honesty to its leaders.

It has been noted above that economic principles which were regarded as being finally determined a half-century since, have

been generally repudiated, necessitating a rewriting of the whole science. The disintegration of the old doctrines induced general confusion of thought, and the rehabilitation of economic science has not yet been accomplished. The body of fundamental principles upon which economists agree seems at times reduced to a negligible mass of axiomatic platitudes. As a natural consequence of this general falling-out with themselves, economists have lost caste in the community. Nor can it be denied that this general discrediting is warranted by the quality of much economic writing—more particularly of economic writing dealing with the labor problem, which is not infrequently characterized by a sort of intellectual cowardice and self-stultification. When a certain train of reasoning leads to a conclusion distasteful to the writer, the conclusion is seen afar off, and reasoning along that line is stopped. One may illustrate this by quotation from a single standard economic treatise written by a French author, who complacently develops the following conclusions regarding the distribution of wealth and the payment of wages, apparently without any consciousness that they are incongruous. The translation of this treatise, it may be noted, is widely used in the United States as an elementary textbook in teaching economics. In the text the following quotations are not consecutive:

We cannot distribute wealth, for it distributes itself in virtue of natural laws which men have not invented, cannot change, and have no motive to alter; for, taking all in all, they approach the largest measure of justice that we can hope to expect for any social system. In fact, the automatic working of these laws enables each member of modern society to be remunerated in proportion to the services rendered by him. . . .

Contrary to the popular belief, the amount of wealth produced is small and insufficient, even in the professedly wealthy classes. . . . Clearly the most skilful distribution in the world will never succeed in allotting large shares where the whole mass to be divided is small.

The social question will be solved, first, by guaranteeing each man the minimum without which he is in danger either of not becoming, or of not remaining, a "man," in the full sense of the word. The next step would be to give the working classes something more than a minimum: viz., a growing share in the benefits of that civilization of which they form a more and more important factor. Further, any wealth which remained over should be put into the hands of those who can make the best use of it.

Here is an absolute denial of the writer's own logic: a shrinking-away from obvious conclusions, and a complete surrender to unreasoning sentimentality unfortunately not uncharacteristic of much economic writing of the day. It follows from the degenerate state of economic doctrine that little competent criticism has been brought to bear upon the programme of trade-unionism by economists.

Economic criticism of trade-unionism does not imply justification or condemnation; it implies nothing more than correct and searching analysis of the programme of organized labor as a practical rule of industrial action. It is not the business of the economist to justify the working of social institutions or of economic laws on ethical grounds. An economic law, as has been often pointed out, is neither right nor wrong, any more than is the law of gravitation. An economic law is descriptive of a condition or fact, not a justification. If the economist finds the prime motive of action in the business world to be self-seeking, he notes that fact. In noting it he is neither justifying nor condemning human nature. Moral judgments do not constitute any portion of economic science. The only judgment germane to economic science is summed up in the word "economic." The economist may not say of the tariff on imports that it is right or wrong, wise or unwise; but if it be asserted that the tariff advances wages of labor, the economist is justified in declaring such a conclusion true or false, provided he can present evidence warranting any conclusion whatever. He may declare that it advances the wages of certain groups of labor, at the expense of other groups or of the community as a whole; or that the effect of the tariff is to advance profits rather than wages. In any case, his judgment is economic, not ethical. In considering the programme of unionism, also the economist neither condemns nor justifies; but if it be contended that unionism advances wages, the economist is, or should be, competent to declare judgment upon that question. He should further be able to declare what are the economic consequences, or some economic consequences, of such a programme of action in the business world.

Regarding the economic consequences of the programme of unionism certain judgments would seem to be warranted. That programme is put forward as a programme of economic advancement of labor. Trade-unionists justly pride themselves upon the fact that they have ridded themselves of certain doctrinaire principles of humanitarianism. As an individual the trade-unionist may be socialist or an anarchist, a Christian or an atheist; but as a trade-unionist he is a wage-earner, seeking to secure a price for his labor. In the sale of labor no social philosophy is involved. The trade-union is an institution for higgling over the price of labor, and as such it is an institution without political or social philosophy. It acts always with an eye single to the interests of its members.

Enlightened selfishness is assumed to be a fundamental principle of action in the business world. The corporation employer is conceived to be soulless, sordid, and self-seeking, and entirely impervious to appeals based upon other than economic interest and necessity. To the extent that this is true, trade-unionists cannot be singled out for especial arraignment on grounds of undue selfishness. If the economist has any criticism to bring against the programme of unionism, it certainly is not properly based upon its self-seeking character, but rather upon a consideration of the question whether or not trade-union selfishness, in itself entirely justifiable, may in fact be properly styled an "enlightened" selfishness, regarding the general welfare of laborers; in a word, whether the practical programme of unionism is calculated to achieve in the industrial world the economic end which it seeks to achieve—namely, the general advancement of wages, and amelioration of the conditions under which labor is exerted. In making this inquiry the programme of organized labor may be discussed briefly under two general heads, considering first its political and secondly its industrial character.

I. Organized labor's espousal or repudiation of political doctrines is naturally determined with the interests of the class which it represents in mind. A present instance illustrating this tendency is found in the attitude of the Labor party in

England on the question of woman's suffrage. On general principles organized labor has favored extension of the suffrage in England as in the United States, since extension of the suffrage confers political power which may be exerted in the interests of labor; but at the recent conference of the Labor party in Belfast, in January, 1907, the following resolution was voted down by a vote of 605,000 to 268,000:

That this conference declares in favor of adult suffrage and equality of the sexes, and urges an immediate extension of the rights of suffrage and of election to women on the same condition as to men.

The explanation of this negative vote is found in the fact that the "feeling of the delegates had been alienated by the election policy of the Women's Political Union and the ascendancy of middle-class influence in their ranks." In a word, the attitude of organized labor upon woman's suffrage depended upon what use it was conceived women might make of their right to vote. If they were likely to vote for labor, then they should have the suffrage; if not, not. Upon the declaration of this vote, Mr. Keir Hardie evidently actuated by more fundamental considerations, and by a sense of devotion to a cause, announced that he might feel obliged to resign the leadership of the Labor party. But the delegates were obviously voting consistently, having regard to class interest rather than principle.

The same principle of action is the determining one in other political issues. In Chicago, where the municipal ownership of street railways has been under discussion for several years past, and in other localities, the attitude of organized labor has depended upon how labor conceived the municipality as an employer of labor. There is no disposition whatever to depend upon the democratic organization of the municipality to insure the public employee fair treatment. The president of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Elevated Railway Employees responded to an address by Mayor Dunne advocating municipal ownership as follows:

To those who are discussing the question of municipal ownership of street railways we want to say that we propose to maintain this organization whether we work for a municipal owner or any other. We know the duplicity

of politicians, and are not enamored of any of their rosy promises. We do not intend to surrender this organization to any of their old "isms" or new "isms" either.

The attitude of organized labor upon the immigration question is determined by its belief—based upon an economic fallacy—that the immigrant by working more cheaply than the American workman thereby lowers the wages of American wage-earners generally. So also similar reasoning regarding the effect upon wages of the competition of convict labor has led organized labor to join with manufacturers and traders in opposing the employment of convicts in trades which will enable the convict to be self-supporting when he leaves the penitentiary. In its "Bill of Grievances" presented to the President last March, the following complaint is entered:

While recognizing the necessity for the employment of the inmates of our penal institutions so that they may be self-supporting, labor has urged in vain the enactment of a law that shall safeguard it from the competition of the labor of convicts.

If convicts may not compete with labor in honest work there is small hope of their regeneration. On the tariff issue, although the first convention of the American Federation of Labor in 1881, declared for protection, organized labor is in fact divided, because it is uncertain whether or not the tariff really advances wages. On the whole it is disposed today to accept the protectionist reasoning on the tariff, and it may be observed that trade-unionism is itself based upon principles of protectionism applied to labor, and may therefore, consistently favor protectionism in general, as opposed to freedom.

A good summary of the general political programme of organized labor is found in the following pronunciamiento, which in one form or another is spread broadcast by the labor press:

We will stand by our friends and administer a stinging rebuke to men or parties who are either indifferent, negligent, or hostile, and, wherever opportunity affords, secure the election of intelligent, honest, earnest trade-unionists, with clear, unblemished, paid-up union cards in their possession.

There can be no question as to the self-seeking activity of capitalistic organizations in influencing legislation by state and federal legislatures, and this is perhaps sufficient justification for



adoption of a similar policy by organized labor. The above statement of political policy might obviously be rewritten for other self-seeking interests in some such way as follows: "We [capitalists, etc.,] will stand by our friends [etc.], and secure election of intelligent, honest, earnest shareholders [etc.], with clear, unblemished, paid-up campaign-fund receipts."

The assumption clearly underlying the above official and semi-official declarations of policy is that organized labor represents labor in general, and this assumption prevails in the face of the often reiterated assertion that the great mass of labor is outside the trade-union fold. At a liberal estimate not above one-tenth of the labor in the United States is organized into trade-unions. Further, the trade-union definition of the wage-earning group excludes a very considerable portion of the population who, if they are not wage-earners strictly speaking, are nevertheless industrious workers, whose interests the state ought to regard as carefully as it regards the interests of wage-earners, organized or unorganized. Class legislation does not cease to be class legislation, and as such vicious and demoralizing in a democracy, because the class represented happens to be relatively numerous. Every political issue should be decided with the interests of the community in mind, rather than the interests of a single class. The American Federation of Labor may honestly believe, as it declares, that its object in politics is "to secure legislation in the interests of the working masses," but this claim is always made more or less sincerely by any class, large or small, seeking political power. In any specific case, legislation favored by organized labor will be found to be legislation in the interests of a relatively small group of wage-earners.

The political programme of organized labor may be summed up by the statement that it is a policy of exploitation of the state, and through the state of the community, in the interests of a class. It goes without saying that this exploitation is, in the minds of the exploiters, in the interests of society as a whole, and of wage-earners in particular—more especially in the interests of organized labor. If the immigration of indigent foreigners is conceived to weaken the power of organized labor to advance

wages, the state is appealed to to stop off that immigration. In administering its penal institutions, the state must regard the interests, not of the convict, but of organized labor. In the performance of any public work, the state must regard, not the taxpayer, but the interests of labor employed either directly or indirectly under contract. As an employer of labor, either directly or indirectly, the state is unique in one respect: its wage-paying power is not related to the efficiency of its employees. There is no limit to the power of the state to advance wages, other than that found in the willingness of the community to subject itself to taxation. The state alone among all employers of labor can raise wages indefinitely and "stay in the business." The private employer's wage-paying power is dependent upon a speculative market. In the market the employer negotiates the sale of the product of labor, and out of the proceeds pays wages. Generally speaking, prices in the market are fixed for, not by, the employer. They are determined largely by the shifting appetites and caprices of the consuming public. The state's wage-paying power is not dependent upon the market but upon its power to levy and collect taxes.

Labor demands of the state that it shall be an exemplary employer of labor. The public employee of state or municipality expects to render less service than is rendered by the employee of a private corporation; he expects to work shorter hours, and to earn higher wages, than he could do under any private employer. Therefore organized labor favors municipal ownership of street railways, and other public-service properties, and is, generally speaking, favorably disposed to all forms of collectivism or state socialism. As an employer of labor, a democratic state develops a weak power of resistance to any organized demand made in the interests of a specific class of its employees. As the number of employees on its pay-roll increases, its power of resistance weakens. Any attempt to adjust wages and conditions of employment to market conditions is bound to encounter the same sort of resistance that is encountered by any effort to revise our tariff schedule upon a scientific basis either of protection or of revenue. As an employer of labor the municipality

or state develops a highly unstable disciplinary power, which is bound to yield to the pressures of political expediency.

Obviously the state cannot fix the standard of living in the community; that is determined ultimately by industrial capacity and output, by productivity of labor and capital, by the state of the industrial arts, by the natural resources and processes of production. These economic conditions determine the material welfare of the community. But the state can tax the whole community in the interests of its employees. It is, therefore, an ideal employer for those whom it employs, who are the immediate beneficiaries of the state's taxing power.

Historically the state has always been an exploiting institution, performing its service of exploitation in the interests now of one class or group of individuals, now of another. Democracy differs from other forms of government in that the exploiting group is more numerous. At least the ideal of democracy is to substitute a large for a small group as the controlling body. It is a matter of common observation that, in its practical working, the small group continues to control in democracy as in aristocracy, only the character of the group is changed. There is no reason to believe that the interests of the community will suffer any greater violation, if the state is taken over by organized labor, than they have suffered at the hands of other classes or groups.

It is a significant fact that, while many in the rank and file of the trade-unionists are avowed socialists, who regard unionism as a present means of advancing their cause, trade-unionism officially repudiates the doctrines of socialism. The socialistic tendencies of unionism are determined by the character of the state as an employer of labor—an employer whose wage-paying power is determined by taxation, not by product. Socialism, however, does not look upon the state as a wage-payer, much less as an exploiting institution, but as an institution for directing labor and apportioning the product of labor arbitrarily, having regard to the interests of the whole community, not of any organized class within the community. Socialism is not based upon the doctrine of enlightened selfishness, but upon the doctrine, enlightened or unenlightened, of unselfishness. Obvi-

ously no form of trade-unionism could be tolerated in a socialistic state, since trade-unionism implies non-unionism, and is avowedly self-seeking, while socialism proposes the general welfare of the whole community. Socialists favor the organization of labor into trade-unions, just as they favor the organization of capitalistic monopolies generally. It cannot be inferred, however, that socialism and unionism are fundamentally reconcilable, any more than it can be inferred that socialism favors the present capitalistic system of industry. The fundamental difference between unionism and socialism lies in this: under unionism, what a man shall do, and what he shall receive for doing it, is to be determined by him; while under socialism, what a man shall do, and what he shall receive for doing it, is to be determined by the state.

2. The industrial programme of organized labor is somewhat more complex and difficult of analysis. Trade-unionists have abandoned some of the more naïve doctrines which marked their earlier development. They do not generally today lay claim to the whole product of industry as the product of manual labor. They admit the claims of other than manual labor to a share of the product, and they have more or less consciously adopted the principles of demand and supply as affecting wages. They are, however, still inclined to repudiate the suggestion that wages are very closely related to productivity of labor, and that the sure means of advancing wages is to increase the efficiency of labor. Essentially the labor-union is an organization, not primarily against the employer, who is only a middle-man, but against the public, and against non-union labor. Each trade-union is, in fact, an organization of that trade against all other trades, organized or unorganized.

Undoubtedly the fullest and most convincing statement of the case for trade-unionism today is found in the writings of Sydney and Beatrice Webb. Their judgments are based upon a wider range of information than that possessed by any other writers. They know the history of the labor movement from its remote origins, and they have an intimate knowledge of the

motives and programme of trade-unionism today. Their defense of unionism embraces, moreover, a consideration of economic literature past and present. It is doubtful if any economist in England or America can raise a question of fact with these writers—few have attempted to do so. In the main, their historical account of the labor movement in England, and their statement of the programme of unionism, stand today unimpeached. In England since the appearance of the Webbs's books little has been added to their statement; in the United States, nothing at all. In some respects it seems almost unfortunate that such a complete summing-up of the achievements and purposes of unionism should have been made. It has almost destroyed the power of original research and thinking in the field which they have covered.

The Webbs's argument in justification of trade-unionism is too familiar to require more than a brief résumé. It is restated in every discussion of the labor problem. In the main, it is as follows: The individual wage-earner is at a disadvantage in bargaining with an employer for employment. The wage-earner's necessities are greater, his knowledge of conditions inferior, to those of the employer. Under a régime of free competition, moreover, the employer is not free, even if so disposed, to pay any higher rate of wages than that paid by the most unscrupulous employer with whom he enters into competition. The ruling rate of wages in any employment is, therefore, fixed under competition, by the employer who exacts the most labor for the least pay, and the tendency of competition is to depress wages indefinitely. Moreover, employers, finding the pressure of competition severe, seek to avoid embarrassment by entering into combinations with competitors, thus increasing their power to maintain prices on the one hand, and to depress wages on the other. Labor is thus forced to combine in order to place itself upon a footing of equality in bargaining for wages—to oppose combination to combination.

It is not proposed to enter into any general discussion of this argument, which is developed in great detail and fortified at every point. Some brief comment is, however, in order in this

connection. Regarding industrial combination, it may be observed that the motive of combination is not primarily to avoid competition, as suggested by the Webbs, but rather to increase efficiency and economy in production. This motive does not underlie the organization of labor; on the contrary, labor leaders distinctly repudiate the idea that there is any very direct reaction of wages upon efficiency of labor; they resent the suggestion that the way to increase wages is to make labor more productive, choosing to rely upon the power of combination and control of labor supply. Again, the assumption that labor organization has been forced by industrial combination is not entirely borne out by historical experience or by present conditions. Historically, labor organization has preceded industrial organization of capital and at the present time the organization of labor is more extensive in many occupations than is the organization of capital.

But the especial significance of the Webbs's exposition lies in its bearing upon the general assumption of unionism that labor, under the capitalistic system of industry, is subject to organized exploitation by a class of capitalist employers. According to the Webbs's philosophy, under a régime of free competition there can be no such class of exploiting employers of labor. What the manufacturer exacts from labor he must yield up in competition with other employers through the wholesale dealer and the retailer to the consumer, who as a result of free competition buys cheaply. It is, in fact, the depression of prices to the consumer, not the machinations of capitalists or traders, which reacts ultimately upon wages to depress them. When, however, producers or distributors effect a combination, they may, it is contended, hold prices up without raising wages correspondingly. This condition is conceived to be labor's opportunity. A monopoly gain or profit exacted from an unorganized public is not determined to capital or to labor by any economic law; it is, to adopt the Webbs's phraseology, "debatable land," and may be taken over by labor or capital according as one or the other develops bargaining power. If labor is sufficiently well organized, it can take over the whole of the debatable or monopoly profit. The power of the labor-union to advance wages beyond

the point where they would be fixed by free competition is measured by the existence of this monopoly profit exacted from the consuming public. In operating to secure its share of this gain the trade-union appears as a monopolistic combination, entering into combination with the capitalistic organization regarding the apportionment of a monopolistic profit.

The philosophy of exploitation thus obtains in the industrial programme of unionism as it does in its political programme. In a word, the trade-union seeks to control wages by controlling the supply of labor, not by affecting or modifying its character. In dealing with capitalistic organizations which are conceived to have succeeded in establishing monopolies, the trade-union appears as an organization for taking over as large a share of the monopoly gains as can be seized upon. The president of the United Mine Workers of America stated that as a result of the last strike in the coal-fields the operators took from the public in increased price of coal some \$30,000,000, of which the miners got as their share only \$16,000,000, and he proposed to demand a larger share for labor. The labor-union may or may not enter into alliance with capitalistic organization in winning these monopoly gains out of the community, but wherever the monopoly profit or gain appears the trade-union seeks to share in its apportionment.

In dealing with its own members the exploiting policy of unionism appears in the tendency to standardize wages irrespective of individual efficiency. The trade-union standard wage is presented as a minimum wage which may be exceeded by the employer. It is, in fact, the common wage actually paid. In the building trades of Chicago unions have stipulated that any man who works on the inside of a building shall be paid a fixed rate; years of experience and individual skill not counting in determining the man's earnings. The given "standard" wage is fixed with reference to the whole group, the inexperience and inefficiency of certain members being offset by the superior skill and efficiency of others. This is clearly a policy of exploiting the skilled, rapid workman in the interests of the slower, less skilled, or average man. It would perhaps be unduly severe to char-

acterize this policy as one of exploitation of the industrious, ambitious workman in the interests of the inefficient. In fact, wherever trade-unionism has become supreme, as in Australasia, this exploitation of the skilled and efficient has led to a depression of energy, loss of ambition, and economic stagnation, rather than to actual exploitation, and has thus defeated its own ends.

The introduction of any evidence tending to show that trade-unionism is based upon the policy of self-protection and self-seeking, such as that cited above, is perhaps quite gratuitous, in view of the fact that unionists do not themselves resent the implication. About the middle of the last century trade-unionism took over certain fundamental economic principles of conduct which it had previously denied, and established itself upon a philosophy of enlightened selfishness. It had put up a splendid fight against the sordid doctrine of the survival of the fit, and against the iron law of wages. It had organized the wage-earners into great national associations for the uplift of toilers. It had denied that wages depended upon supply and demand. It had declared that manual labor created all wealth, and that it had only to demand its own product in order to secure general amelioration. In this effort at general amelioration of the wage-earning class it failed. One organization after another achieved rapid growth in membership, only to disintegrate when the test came. Then the more intelligent and better-paid groups of wage-earners adopted the economic philosophy based upon enlightened selfishness, and sought to improve their own conditions by acting in accord with those very principles of demand and supply which they had earlier repudiated. Today the trade-unionist takes a justifiable pride in the fact that he is acting in accordance with these principles.

The history of social movements during the nineteenth century seems to justify the generalization that achievement has been inversely proportional to idealism. The pull of consciously adopted ideals upon the natural trend of affairs has been a negligible influence. Great expectations of social amelioration have presaged failure, and progress has been achieved blindly,



in directions which have not been intended—fortuitously, fatally, accidentally. Idealism has inspired devotees, but it has developed little or no power to uplift or ameliorate social conditions. Socialism as a philosophy has presented alluring utopias, but for actual achievement it has depended upon the fatal working of economic laws, and upon the machinations of selfish interests, upon those tendencies and characters of capitalism which it has denounced as sordid and vicious. Wherever it has attempted to realize its ideals in isolation from these sordid and vicious tendencies it has failed. Co-operation as a panacea failed, but when it became a petty and uninspired sort of shop-keeping, it began to achieve great results. Even trade-unionism could not succeed until it became petty and essentially selfish in its ends; based upon ideals of universal brotherhood, it failed disastrously and repeatedly. If, therefore, trade-unionism today appears as a movement somewhat devoid of idealism, petty and self-seeking in character, indisposed to commit itself to any doctrine or programme of social amelioration, philosophically pragmatic and opportunist, in that very barrenness of ideal lies its surest promise of practical achievement. In view of this promise of success and practical achievement, trade-unionists will not resent the characterization of their programme as one which is essentially a programme of action rather than of inspiration.

As a programme of action it is essential to the welfare of labor that it shall be an enlightened one. The trade-union appears in the modern industrial world as an institution for negotiating the sale of labor in the open market; in effecting this sale, upon the terms most favorable to labor, it performs a useful service. A wise merchant, however, regards the quality of the wares which he offers for sale, and it would seem that the same principle should apply to the sale of labor. The trade-union should be jealous of the quality of union labor, and should insist that it be better than any other put upon the market. It should rely upon the quality of the labor which it controls to enhance the price or wages of labor. But unionism relies upon everything else first and upon efficiency last: it relies upon the tariff to raise wages, upon monopolistic organiza-

tion of capital and of labor, upon force and intimidation, upon legislation and political intrigue.

All this violates fundamental economic principles. The economist recognizes that economic laws encounter a great deal of friction in practical experience, but he cannot admit that mere organization, mere legislation, mere combination, much less such expedients as resort to a tariff on imports, or exclusion of immigrants, or government or municipal ownership, are real economic factors affecting the amount of wages. They are extra-economic. The standard of living of the American workman is not fixed by legislation or by combination, but by industrial capacity of labor and capital, and by natural resources. To ignore economic forces and conditions, and to rely upon expedients and exploitation, does not appear to the economist to be a policy of "enlightened" selfishness.

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